

## Lingering Traces of You

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# Lingering Traces of You

by [orphan\\_account](#)

## Summary

The fallen leaves of autumn scatter, leaving traces of his glory. Some disappear quietly, some are forgotten, unknown and never to be recovered, and some remain deeply in the heart, never to ever go.

# A Chat History

There are probably millions of messages in the Glory Pro Alliance QQ. At least a hundred are added to the group a day through the sole power of Huang Shaotian's never ending chatter.

It's not common for people who are newly added to backread to see what they have missed. It is much less common for people to look all the way to the beginning of the creation of the group. After all, there are millions of messages from pro players throughout the years.

Had someone did backread all the way to the beginning, however, they would notice that the QQ hadn't always been called the Glory Pro Alliance QQ. Instead, it was the Glory Addicts QQ.

Had they all backread to the very beginning, they also would have noticed that the first thousand or so messages weren't about the league at all. Even months past the messages dated with dates after the beginning of Season 1, there were very few messages about the pro alliance besides the common gamer language and curses seen after losing a match.

Instead, the messages on the QQ were just conversations between people who loved Glory the game very much. Some research on silver equipment, some hidden quest discoveries, some bug discoveries and excited boasting of a new micromanipulation technique that can be applied to a skill. Many strategies, many call outs and demands for a PK in the arena or wild depending on how angry a person was, many cursing when wild BOSSes were stolen and lost.

This was the history of the Glory Pro Alliance QQ. This was their shared glory together before it all. The history shared between people who loved Glory and of course victory even more when news of the start of the Pro Alliance spread.

Not everyone would actually make it to the alliance.

If someone did read the QQ from the beginning, they would notice a name that had once frequently appeared... stopping to message the group after a certain date.

He was still on the QQ. Anyone who was in was never really kicked out, retired after a long time or not, but that profile name never became active since then.

## A Rainy Day

To any of their fans, the managers must have booked wrong because Tyranny and Excellent Era lived in the same hotel, but both teams actually didn't mind.

And so, Ye Xiu found himself in Han Wenqing's room after a match, the two continuing to talk and play Glory. It had been a relatively peaceful time, the ambient sound of rain and tapping of keyboards soft and rhythmic enough to make one sleep. But Han Wenqing made a tsk sound when he rifled through his luggage for his own body wash, but couldn't find it. He didn't like hotel provided toiletries.

Ye Xiu looked up when Han Wenqing finally gave up and moved to get his umbrella.

"I'm going out."

Ye Xiu had been lying shamelessly on Han Wenqing's bed like a lazy cat as he played Glory on his laptop, but at the words, he jolted and sat up. The card reader tumbled and laptop shook with the shift in weight on the bed, but Ye Xiu ignored them to look at Han Wenqing with wide eyes.

"In this weather?"

Han Wenqing was surprised for a moment. Such an ordinary declaration didn't deserve such a response, but as he looked at Ye Xiu's eyes and heard the storm outside, he remembered something that he had learned not too long ago.

At the beginning of the alliance, when they had finally met in person, Han Wenqing was looking for that other person who liked to accompany One Autumn Leaf in the games, but hadn't found him. He asked and Ye Xiu's answer was two words. (*He died.*)

"...Yeah." He mumbled awkwardly.

"...I'm going with you too!" Ye Xiu finally said after a silence. Quicker than he had ever seen the lazy guy move, Ye Xiu scrambled to his feet to follow him. "I need to buy a pack of cigarettes anyways."

Han Wenqing didn't say anything about the full pack that he had seen in his friend's pocket earlier and just nodded.

"Sure."

They left.

Han Wenqing was bigger than Ye Xiu, stronger and probably more athletic. If one should protect the other, than it should be him. But he said nothing as he let Ye Xiu stand on the side of the sidewalk that was closer to the still busy street full of cars. He said nothing as Ye Xiu watched them carefully and even slipped his smooth lithe hand into his more rugged and

brawny ones, squeezing and leading him along as he remembered his mother would do when he was little.

They shared an umbrella just walking through the rainy streets, saying nothing as they listened to car wheels and a few occasional honks.

The convenience store that they entered sold umbrellas, but neither of them bought any, sharing the same umbrella back.

# Twinsicle

Su Mucheng smiled when she was given the second half of the twinsicle.

Her brother used to get jealous when Ye Xiu would share his twinsicle with her and not him. Then, he would pout when Ye Xiu hadn't felt the same when he himself gave her the other half of his twinsicle so she can eat more and have both flavors.

They sat amiably on a green bench in the little neighborhood park. It was a relatively hot day, but there were still many people running about, going down the slides or playing in the sand. Ye Xiu had already closed his eyes, basking in the rare sun he got when he finally went out.

Su Mucheng was grateful that there was still someone by her who she could share a twinsicle with.

She was also grateful that there was still someone who knew, who remembered, who could imagine his voice and smile and the things he would do had he still been here with them. Her brother and the little details of him hadn't been forgotten.

## Block

Almost everyone had an experience of blocking Huang Shaotian on QQ or on their phone.

After all, not everyone was up for incessant chatter or had the patience like Yu Wenzhou to listen through everything he said.

Surprisingly, although Ye Xiu didn't have as much patience for noise like Yu Wenzhou, he had never blocked Huang Shaotian on his QQ and, when he later got one, on his phone.

Some say with emotion that this really is the proof that Huang Shaotian and Ye Xiu were really best friends, but Su Mucheng knew better and quietly held the corner of Ye Xiu's shirt when he had got and looked down at his new phone.

It had been years since he had his own. The last time he had received a call on his phone was when he had heard the news of a car accident. Since then, he had been afraid to have a phone because he didn't want to hear the bad news of any of his friends.

But now he had one forced on him by his family.

Since he had one, he should use it.

Although Su Muqiu had never called him for help and Ye Xiu had only gotten the call from the hospital after the event, Ye Xiu also wondered what if and quietly thought to himself that since he had a phone and only his family and friends knew his number, he should never block them because what if one day they would really need him.

Just in case.

He would never block any of his family or friends no matter what for that just in case possibility.

It was better to hear Huang Shaotian forever noisy than silent forever.

## Autumn Tree

"Hey! You're finally here! Where did you go?! Do you know how disorienting it is to see One Autumn Leaf running around alone? How horrifying? I'm always on my toes looking out for where the hell you are hiding in the ambush whenever I see One Autumn Leaf! Pay for my mental damage-!" The man who operated Swoksaar froze when he heard crying, a girl's crying. He sweated, "Hey, what kind of cursed recording did you download off the Internet? I knew you were shameless, but this is too much! Are you going to use this technique when you scam everyone now? Hey, please turn it off-"

"Swoksaar." Amidst the crying, a familiar male voice spoke. It wasn't the one that usually came with Autumn Tree, no, it was One Autumn Leaf's, but Wei Chen sighed in relief when it was a voice. (Though a part of him chilled when he heard the seriousness of that voice and the crying in the background hadn't stopped.) "Sorry, can you go away?" The voice that normally accompanied One Autumn Leaf said apologetically and Wei Chen could only manipulate Swoksaar to nod. As he turned to leave, he heard One Autumn Leaf quietly say, "If it's possible, please don't bother Autumn Tree for the next few days. He died and this is his sister."

Swoksaar turned back to Autumn Tree, stricken, but Autumn Tree was already manipulated to run away.

Although Wei Chen had never explained the reason why they shouldn't, he blackmailed all of his friends to leave Autumn Tree alone for the next few weeks. They thought that he had been scammed or tricked again somehow, but Wei Chen never corrected them.

He never said anything about the incident or Autumn Tree for the next few years, not even when some friends, veteran Glory players, would remember and ask about that Gunner God.

That year, every day, he would just quietly look at his friend list, at the lessening appearances of Autumn Tree among his active friends, until finally the name turned gray forever.

He drank a lot on that day.

*"You really are such a scammer," he cursed under his breath as he drank, "making me drink despite the first season that is approaching. You know that pro players shouldn't drink. This is so dirty... you're so dirty... you're the worst..." he buried his head in his hand and after another second took another swig to force the feeling out. When he swung his arm, the beer splashed with his wild motions and he pretended that it was the beer that was on his face.*





# Equipment

Actually, it was Ye Xiu who was more into fashion and appearance, and not Su Muqiu.

At least, this was the case in the beginning.

Because in the beginning, Ye Xiu had still been a young master who had known his fabrics, brands, and styles. He had still been the shopping war veteran after the many times his mother had dragged him out to help her critique and choose her clothes and also the ragdoll who had been dragged around and dressed like a toy doll countless times.

While Su Muqiu was the shameless and disheveled one, always more concerned about getting money and putting food on the table than fashion and who could blame him? Ye Xiu thought nothing of it when Su Muqiu used his spare money to let Su Mucheng buy clothes and even when Su Muqiu wore the most ridiculous outfits for money when some neighborhood children wanted to bully and laugh at him a little.

But fashion?

Su Muqiu had known nothing about it.

The only reason why One Autumn Leaf and Evil Annihilation looked good was because Ye Xiu had taken Su Muqiu's rare materials hostage until he had fixed it.

Autumn Tree was surprisingly passable, but Dancing Rain also only looked good because both he and Su Muqiu refused to let the avatar based on their little sister look bad.

In the beginning, appearance wasn't something Ye Xiu could trust Su Muqiu for.

But after Su Muqiu was gone, Ye Xiu also found himself not bothering to care. Colors faded, meaning did as well, and he couldn't bring himself to change Lord Grim's blueprints anymore.

There was no Su Muqiu with whom he can argue about their most glorious avatar's equipment anymore.

He left everything as it was.

## Friend List

One of the most awkward things about inheriting an account was all the friends on the list that an inheritor would not know.

Sun Xiang had once thought about clearing One Autumn Leaf's friend list, but something stopped him before he had pushed the confirmation button.

Instead, he found himself looking through the list, curious about the players who had been lucky enough to befriend the Battle God throughout the years. A part of him had also been deeply curious about Ye Xiu and he felt like a stalker, but he ignored those two parts of him firmly and continued scrolling down.

There had been too many names.

Sun Xiang felt a little annoyed. He thought knowing Ye Xiu would be special, but look at how many thousands of friends he had! He wanted to de-friend them all. Only those who were worthy could be the Battle God's friend!

But again, he didn't because he realized that there was an option to look at the friend list through customized categories. Sun Xiang wanted to bash his head against a wall. Had it been so long since he played the game that he had forgot? All the others of his generation would laugh at him had they known. (Actually, they wouldn't because most trainees in the training camp didn't touch the online game.)

With a click, the long list of names organized themselves into categories and Sun Xiang stared at the category names.

Family (2)

Friends (69)

Game Studios (190)

Internet Cafe Friends (87)

Uncategorized (2398)

Although Sun Xiang was a little stunned that One Autumn Leaf might have been used for cheap labor like power leveling and assassinations and other services offered by game studios, Sun Xiang couldn't help but focus more on the category labeled Family, feeling more than ever that he was stepping too far into someone's privacy.

Still, he couldn't help but be curious.

Struggling between his curiosity and his morals, Sun Xiang finally clicked after a few seconds. The small list of names unfurled itself.

Family (2)

Dancing Rain

Autumn Tree

Sun Xiang huffed that those two really were siblings, but he wondered who Autumn Tree was. He had never heard of that name. He wondered if he was as close to Ye Xiu as Su Mucheng was.

He blamed his curiosity. He typed Autumn Tree onto the Glory look-up function and then on the forums on a separate window. The two loaded around the same time.

Sun Xiang snorted as he saw the level that Autumn Tree had. Level 50. *Weak.*

But then he saw the titles of some of the posts on the Glory forums (*Battle God and Gunner God dominates the Arena!*) and clicked on them curiously.

He couldn't stop clicking on the videos after that.

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"Who is Autumn Tree?" Sun Xiang blurted out after seeing Ye Xiu use One Autumn Leaf to fight with Zhou Zekai's Cloud Piercer to show him some Battle Mage-Sharpshooter strategies they could use in the World Invitationals.

Ye Xiu froze. Su Mucheng did as well. The other pro players looked at each other with questions in their head. And finally, Su Mucheng answered.

"My brother. He died."

Sun Xiang shouldn't have asked. The last log of him entering the game being almost ten years ago should have clued him in, but he apologized, feeling disappointed and solemn.

## Dream

Being team leader of the newly formed national team that was soon going to represent the nation in front of the world and even expected to take the championship among so many God-level players was exhausting. Everyone both pitied and admired Ye Xiu for it as they watched him plan out and supervise their training, research the other national teams, create strategies and tactics for their slapped-together team, answer phone calls about logistics and other tedious things, and schedule the interviews and press conferences and promotional material as expected of their nation-representing team.

When he fell asleep sometimes in the middle of showing them video compilations he made of the other national team players, none of them blamed him and even wanted to let him rest a little longer after the video ended.

Unfortunately, they had a tight schedule as well.

Su Mucheng was sent to wake him up. She did so gently, rocking his shoulder. She made nearly no reaction when a sleepy whine "...qiu..." escaped his lips as he blearily blinked his eyes before sobering up quickly, not one to show weakness too long in front of others.

Judging by Sun Xiang's stricken face and many narrowed eyes and the contemplated looks of the master tacticians, Su Mucheng could tell that they might be thinking that he was calling for One Autumn Leaf in his sleep, possibly even reaching out for that account card in his dream.

Only Su Mucheng knew however that they were grumbles at her brother. Before it became Su Mucheng's job, it had been her brother who had always woken up Ye Xiu.

# Thought

Although it had been almost a year since Sun Xiang had inherited the Battle Mage account, the first thought everyone had when they thought about One Autumn Leaf was Ye Xiu.

When One Autumn Leaf and Ye Xiu were put together, they then thought of how reluctant Ye Xiu must have been to let go of One Autumn Leaf, of how One Autumn Leaf may have felt that way too.

But the first thought Ye Xiu had of One Autumn Leaf wasn't himself or these things, but of Su Muqiu, the battles that they had fought together in that first server, and the battle lance that Su Muqiu had made.

One Autumn Leaf, he had been reluctant to let go of because of their long partnership and glory...

But One Autumn Leaf would still be alive at the peak of glory forever.

It was his memories of Su Muqiu and Autumn Tree and their times together that were what he was most reluctant to let go.

# Trophy

Ye Xiu wondered what Su Muqiu's face would look like had he held the trophy in his hand, was able to touch the gold and keep it.

He smiled.

Ye Xiu preferred winning or losing, the victory and glory of winning a championship, but he didn't mind the trophy that came with it. It was a little useless like the MVP certificates he sometimes kept crumpled up in his pockets, but he liked to imagine what his friend would be like had he won one.

# Advertisement

There was an old advertisement, a yellowed torn half forgotten thing on the bulletin board of an Internet cafe. It had never been taken down, the owner having not cared about who posts what there and not looked at the contents of the board for years, but it had long since been out of date. There was even a note on it left by another person that warned others that the number had been out of service ten years ago.

It was an advertisement offering power leveling, assassinations, high arena records, dungeon runs, equipment sales, anything that can be offered in regards to the game Glory.

The childish crayon drawing of two kids, one with orange hair and the other with black, in the corner was almost faded away from time.



# Tree

*("Ye Xiu! Ye Xiu!" A boy hurriedly called, his hands gesturing for him to come closer in excitement, "Look! I found a bug in Glory! This tree doesn't refresh no matter how much damage it takes!")*

*Another boy unhurriedly came over, his expression bored. "So?"*

*"So let's put our names here!" The orange-haired boy grinned. "As long as Glory exists, our names will be here in the game forever!")*

A man smoked as he operated Dancing Rain, the wisps of the smoke filling half of his vision but he remained unhindered as he had Dancing Rain jump through the rocky canyons flawlessly. After winding through a hidden, unknown path, he found a tree, the sole tree in the cavern of red rocks.

He smiled around his cigarette when he realized that no one else had found it or at the very least, hadn't been dumb and bored enough to experiment with such a random decoration in the background.

Brushing his hand against the trunk, he had Dancing Rain lean forward to see two names written by a battle lance.

One Autumn Leaf and Autumn Tree - Best Partners Forever

It read.

## Password

Huang Shaotian cursed and grumbled as he failed to get into Ye Xiu's phone again. After another attempt, he jumped to his feet with a shout and clambered to Ye Xiu who had been studying yet another national team's players and tactics. Japan, this time, Huang Shaotian idly noticed as he slammed his hand on Ye Xiu's desk and pushed his phone forward.

"Ye Xiu, Ye Xiu, Ye Xiu, what's your password? Why isn't it your birthday or birth year or Su Mucheng's birthday or birth year or the loveable me's birthday or birth year? Aren't birthdays the most common phone password in the world?! I thought you would be too lazy to think of another password so why isn't it a birthday? Ye Xiu, I want to know! I won't stop until I know what it is!"

Ye Xiu looked up at Huang Shaotian in amusement. "Isn't the whole purpose of a password to keep nosy pests like you out? Why should I tell you?"

"Old Ye, we're not friends! How dare you call me a nosy pest! And I'll tell you that the purpose of a password is to keep strangers out! Are we strangers? No! We're loveable teammates and best friends and I promise to keep your password a secret so tell me! I'm so bored and curious and need to know! How are you going to repay China if this affects my performance in a game huh, huh, huh?"

Ye Xiu snorted. "If this is enough to affect your performance, we need another player to replace you as soon as possible. You aren't national team quality enough."

"I'll tell you that I'm very national team quality!" Huang Shaotian shouted in outrage.

Ye Xiu laughed before dismissively listing off a few numbers to Huang Shaotian's glee and affirmation of their friendship. It wasn't like there was anything private on his phone anyways.

As Huang Shaotian left, Ye Xiu also couldn't help but softly think that his password was a birthday. It was a birthday not Huang Shaotian would know of, but it'll be one that Ye Xiu would always think of and remember.

In October, that guy would have been 29 huh.

## Records

Glory was always advancing and Ye Xiu believed that all records were meant to be broken. Still, he couldn't help but be a bit solemn when he had seen the aftermath of him using Lord Grim to grab records.

Now, all the records of the other servers were being broken one by one for practice to set a record better than Lord Grim's in the tenth server.

Now, all the records set by him and that guy were being buried under the glory of future generations.

(He couldn't even see One Autumn Leaf and Autumn Tree on the first place of almost all the dungeon leaderboards.)

This was a good thing. Ye Xiu would always support the children becoming stronger and surpassing the old. This was the way it should be. Glory should always be moving forward instead of going back or staying stagnant.

Still, he was a little nostalgic and sentimental about those records he used to set with his friend in the first server.

## Signature

"You want my signature, don't you?" Huang Shaotian teased out of nowhere.

Ye Xiu scoffed. "As if."

He already had the only signature that he wanted. Su Muqiu had forced it on him years back, saying the same thing even before he became a pro. One day, it'll be worth a lot, Su Muqiu shouted, always full of dreams and ideas to get money.

Although no one would know him besides them and the autograph would be worth less than a cent, it had been worth a lot as he had said though.

Always, it had been worth a lot to him.

*You who should have had the greatest glory*

## **Name**

He would never tell his idiot little brother this, but sometimes he was jealous of Ye Qiu's name, if only for the 'qiu' he shared with Muqiu.

There had been many things he wanted to share with Muqiu.

# Sentiment

*Will you forget me?*

*No, when you go to grab the BOSS, I will save you from the guilds and help you.*

*When you play professionally on the stage, I will be there at your side fighting with you.*

*When you make silver weapons, I will gather the materials for you.*

*When you cook for Mucheng and I, I will be around the corner, preparing the table and  
cleaning up the house.*

*We will always be together.*

*I will always love you.*

# Money

Ye Xiu never minded giving other people money.

If he could give money to them, then that was great because that meant that they were alive.

There was one person that Ye Xiu always tried to give money to, but couldn't.

Everything would always come back to him unclaimed. To that guy who wanted money, enough to give them a good stable life, money was impossible to give.

## Interview

One day, in a Happy hosted Q/A livestream, someone asked if Ye Xiu had a ship. While many scolded the fan and others wondered if Ye Xiu even knew what the word meant, to everyone's surprise, Ye Xiu answered honestly,

"I sometimes think about ZhouXiang."

The livestream exploded, everyone screaming or shouting or discussing even if they didn't ship ZhouXiang.

In the end, the server crashed as news spread and everyone clamored over each other to ask Ye Xiu more questions, wanting to know if ZhouXiang was real, if Ye Xiu had any other ships, if Ye Xiu ever shipped himself with someone.

Fang Rui whistled when the computer monitor froze. He turned to Ye Xiu and asked curiously, "Why Zhou Zekai and Sun Xiang?"

Ye Xiu made a tiny hm noise before saying, "I think Battle Mages and Sharpshooters should be together."

Qiao Yifan was about to ask who Ye Xiu thought he should be with then because he had once been a Battle Mage himself, but thankfully he caught himself before he asked the question.

All of Happy remembered when Wei Chen had told them about Su Muqiu.



# All Stars

The theme for the Season 11 All Stars hosted by Happy was New Beginnings. Ye Xiu had been invited and he was stunned when the opening was used to project a story rather than just display a light show of the 24 All Stars performing.

The story was a story of Glory.

Ye Xiu watched as One Autumn Leaf and Desert Dust along with many other first server All Star characters appeared, seemingly born into the starting village. They did quests and ran dungeons in a fast forwarded manner. One Autumn Leaf and Desert Dust reenacted their first match - a PK in the wild. Then, the first server All Stars appeared on a stage, fighting with other avatars until one team held the trophy.

Everything was fast forwarded to fit the seasons in the time allotted. Season 1 to 3, the Golden Generation appearing and new glory to be seen, the generations following, and then One Autumn Leaf temporarily leaving and then Lord Grim appearing in the tenth server and making himself known. He gathered others from the tenth server and then other new faces from the Heavenly Domain and led them to the stage, fighting a hard battle until he won at the end and the new team of new challengers won the championship. The projected stage opened up, seemingly expanding into a higher stage as flashes of the World Tournament appeared.

And the All Stars opening ended with all the first server All Stars looking towards the rookies, the generation that would follow and continue their glory and bring even more new beginnings to Glory.

Ye Xiu was quiet as he watched this summary of Glory's history, as he watched their story be told. Countless memories flowed through him and he laughed, remembering what that guy had once said when the new update had come out. He remembered these words that had appeared to him when he left Excellent Era, but never Glory.

This year, he was retired, but it seemed that guy's words were still in his heart.

*"It's just starting all over again."*

One Autumn Leaf and Excellent Era, countless newcomers and teams, championships and failures to succeed, Lord Grim and Happy, a new stage on the World Tournament, and the bountiful future present for Glory.

There had been many ups and downs. He was glad that he had never stopped walking on this journey. He was glad that he had never failed to look up and start all over again.

Although he was retired and settling in his family business, this too was just a new start!

And there were still many things he enjoyed and had to look forward to in Glory because they too were always starting all over again every season with new blood and new hopes and

new runs towards that goal of victory.

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